

DOMAINE JEAN-LOUIS CHAVE

MAUVES EN ARDÈCHE - FRANCE



Wine growers in the northern Rhône since 1491, the Chave family (currently helmed by Gérard and son Jean-Louis) represents 16 generations of unbroken lineage committed to the production of some of the finest Syrah, Marsanne, and Roussanne on the planet. Jean Louis joined his father in 1992 after completing undergraduate studies at University of Connecticut and a degree in oenology at Davis. It was at that time that he completely replanted vineyards on the family's original estate in Saint-Joseph, which had been abandoned in the early 1900's when phylloxera hit the region.

The key to perfect balance in Chave's Hermitage is in their remarkable blending skill, which begins again every season. Many hours of thought, insight, and conversation go into the final component blend for Hermitage. Never once has the Chave family released a single vineyard or cru Hermitage. While percentages vary from year to year, the constant backbone of Hermitage Rouge is Syrah from Bessards Vineyard with its steep, granitic slopes. Similarly with the Blanc, the components vary, however the base is made from old vines Marsanne from their Péléat monopole. Some Roussanne is also added to the final blend.

Long-lived wines of great purity, elegance, power, and finesse, Chave Hermitage is winemaking in its apogee. In years when they believe the quality of Hermitage will not be compromised, their ultra-rare prestige "Cuvée Cathelin" is bottled, which represents a variation on their Hermitage with the same lieux-dits at different percentages.

Jean-Louis Chave Selections, his négociant line which sources grapes from various areas in the northern Rhône, represents a more accessible way for the consumer to experience the wines of the Chave family. "Mon Coeur" Côtes-du-Rhône is a blend of excellent plots in Vinsobres, Visan, Buisson, and Estargues while "Silène" Crozes-Hermitage is 50% estate Syrah and 50% purchased. As with all things Chave, quality is eminent even at the entry level.

The Chave's methods for all their winemaking are traditional farming, super low yields, full ripeness, and minimal manipulation. Their unmatched meticulousness continues through five centuries to render venerable expressions of the purest of northern Rhône terroir.



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